

Call for Candidates in MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2026

Deadline for expression of interest: 30 April 2026

Are you a talented and ambitious postdoc thinking about your next career move? The GOVTRUST Centre of Excellence (University of Antwerp, Belgium) invites expressions of interest from researchers interested in submitting a high-quality Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship proposal with GOVTRUST as a host.

Who are we?

The [University of Antwerp](#) is a university in Belgium with over 25.000 students and 7.200 staff members in 9 faculties. The university is a strong research university with more than 4.500 scientific papers per year and ranks fifth in the ranking of young universities (Times Higher Education Millennials).

The [GOVTRUST Centre of Excellence](#) is an interdisciplinary research consortium focusing on “Trust and Distrust in the Governance of Societal Transitions”. GOVTRUST combines high-level scientific expertise of three faculties (Law, Social Sciences, and Business & Economics) and seven disciplines (political science, public administration, law, communication sciences, sociology, organisational behaviour, and learning sciences) to jointly conduct frontline interdisciplinary research on the dynamics, causes and effects of trust and distrust in and within the governance of societal transitions. GOVTRUST aims to maximise scientific impact combined with a substantial societal impact.

Please check [our website](#) for further information about the GOVTRUST Centre of Excellence and its members.

Our offer

We invite **expressions of interest** from candidates wishing to develop an MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship proposal in the broad area of ‘trust and distrust in the governance of societal transitions’, particularly domains for which GOVTRUST supervisors have expressed availability. These domains and corresponding supervisors are listed in the annex below. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult this overview and to align their proposal with the expertise of an identified supervisor.

Selected candidates will receive: (1) academic **support** from the envisioned supervisor in developing a competitive MSCA proposal; (2) guidance from a dedicated research manager; (3) and administrative and procedural support from the University of Antwerp’s Grants Office (including a **training** on ‘Preparing for an Horizon Europe MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship’).

Only proposals assessed as promising will be supported for full MSCA submission.

About the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme

An MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship implies that a researcher travels to an institution in another country (host), where they work with a supervisor to deliver a specific research project. MSCA-PFs support frontier research and innovation projects in Europe and worldwide:

- European Postdoctoral Fellowships: 12-24 months
- Global Postdoctoral Fellowships: 24-36 months
 - 12-24 months outgoing phase (outside Europe)
 - 12 months return phase (Europe)

The salary consists of a combined living, mobility and family allowance. This year's deadline for full proposals is 9 September 2026.

Your profile (eligibility)

We expect candidates to be **promising, innovative researchers with an excellent track record** appropriate to career stage, as evidenced by academic publications and other scientific output.

Only candidates that **meet the following MSCA eligibility criteria** will be considered:

- You must have a completed PhD at the time of the call deadline (9 September 2026).
- You can only apply up to eight years after the completion of your PhD (excluding experience outside research and career breaks (e.g. due to parental leave)).
- You must not have resided or worked in Belgium for more than 12 months during the three years up to the call deadline.

Please ensure that you consult the [MSCA website](#) and the [European Commission's Online Portal](#) for further details on the call.

How to apply (expression of interest)

To be considered to apply with GOVTRUST (University of Antwerp) as host institution, please submit one single PDF file containing:

- 1) A 2-page project proposal, including:
 - The name of the GOVTRUST supervisor you envision for the project proposal – see list below.
 - The intended fellowship type (European or Global)
- 2) An academic CV, including:
 - Full name and contact details
 - Current position and institution
 - Highest degree obtained and date of award, and the degree-granting institution
 - Publication list
 - Name and contact details of two academic referees

Send in your application at the latest by 30 April 2026 to sophie.opdebeeck@uantwerpen.be and the GOVTRUST supervisor of your choice (see annex below). Expressions of interest will be evaluated by the envisioned supervisor.

The most promising candidates, based on CV quality and proposal strength in relation to the MSCA evaluation criteria, will be invited to further develop a full MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship application with further guidance and support.

Candidates will be notified of the outcome as soon as possible after the deadline.

For further enquiries, you can contact Sophie Op de Beeck (sophie.opdebeeck@uantwerpen.be, GOVTRUST research manager) or one of the professors of GOVTRUST (see annex below).

Annex – Potential supervisors and their expertise

* Only the supervisors listed below are available to host MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship applications under this call.

Supervisor	Expertise	Contact
Jonathan Bernaerts	Communication by the judiciary; language policies and rights	jonathan.bernaerts@uantwerpen.be
Peter Bursens	Multi-level governance, interest groups, federalism, EU-politics, EU environmental/climate policies, regions in the EU, democracy and legitimacy in multi-level political systems	peter.bursens@uantwerpen.be
Dirk De Bièvre	Political economy of linkage of EU environmental and EU trade policy; EU trading partners' responses to EU CBAM; issue linkage across all EU external policy fields; weaponisation of trade policy instruments under EU 'Strategic Open Autonomy'; state-industry relations in European defence cooperation	dirk.debievre@uantwerpen.be
Cedric Jenart	Public law, especially constitutional principles, institutional law, human rights and federalism. Research on how constitutional principles structure and limit governmental powers, including the legal limits on outsourcing rule-making powers and the role of constitutional safeguards in democratic states. Particular focus on shared governmental responsibility to properly exercise powers.	cedric.jenart@uantwerpen.be
Petra Meier	Distrust in the governance of societal transitions based on dynamics of marginalization, discrimination and exclusion of social groups (gender, LGBTQIA+, SOGI, race, and possible intersections); the governance of societal transitions related to gender, LGBTQIA+, SOGI, race issues, and possible intersections; the (re)production of inequalities in politics and policies and their relation to understandings of (the functioning of) democracy and its (lack of) legitimacy	petra.meier@uantwerpen.be
Stijn Oosterlynck	State/city relations; urban governance; civil society organizations; public-civic collaboration; local social innovation	stijn.oosterlynck@uantwerpen.be

Piet Van den Bossche	Learning and performance in teams and collaborative environments (e.g. communities, networks), and the influence of leadership and stress in these settings. Methodological focus on observations, video/audio analysis and psychophysiology (eg HR, HRV).	piet.vandenbossche@uantwerpen.be
Wouter Van Dooren	Public governance and public-private cooperation. Performance indicators, accountability, and learning. Productive conflict in public participation and policy making.	wouter.vandooren@uantwerpen.be
Esther van Zimmeren	Intellectual Property Law & Governance, innovation policies, technology transfer, technology governance, trust and regulation of new technologies, trust and (specialized) courts, resilience and law	esther.vanzimmeren@uantwerpen.be
Koen Verhoest	Political control and performance of autonomous agencies in multi-level settings; coordination strategies; innovation through collaboration and digitalisation; agile government; governance of cross-cutting/wicked issues; trust as context (trust and autonomy, trust and regulation, trust and reputation, trust and collaborative innovation)	koen.verhoest@uantwerpen.be
Jan Wynen	Organizational change and turbulence – employee commitment and identification – stress and wellbeing – diversity and team dynamics – reputation and external signals	jan.wynen@uantwerpen.be